

Bobcats Surge To Second at Nationals

Written by Whitney Noble

Saturday, 26 October 2013 21:26

The Lees-McRae College cycling team continued its strong weekend at the USA Cycling Collegiate Mountain Bike National Championships at the Beech Mountain Ski Resort on Saturday, placing a trio of riders on the podium to move into second in the team omnium standings heading into Sunday's final day.

Fort Lewis College continues to hold the top spot in the team standings, compiling 483 points thus far while finishing first in the women's downhill and second in the men's event to overcome Lees-McRae's morning lead. The Bobcats head into Sunday in second with 451 points, followed by Marian University (406), University of Colorado – Boulder (324) and Lindsey Wilson College (268).

Kerry Werner (Birdsboro, Pa.) continued his bid for the individual omnium with another strong performance in Saturday morning's cross country race, finishing second to earn his second podium of the weekend.

Luke Vrouwenvelder (Chapel Hill, N.C.) claimed a spot on the podium as well, finishing fifth, as Gunnar Bergey (Harleysville, Pa.) and Davis Bentley (Mill Valley, Calif.) placed 15th and 17th, respectively. Cody Phillips (Altadena, Calif.) and Brian Jorgensen (Bend, Ore.) rounded out the event for the Bobcats, claiming the 29th and 30th spots in the field of 87 riders.

The Bobcats continued to build on the momentum in the women's cross country race, placing five riders in the top 15 and seven in the first 22 to hold on to the top spot in the team omnium. Emily Shields (Salisbury, N.C.) crossed the line first for the Bobcats, finishing in sixth, one spot shy of the podium.

Emma Klingaman (Idlywild, Calif.) added a top-10 performance of her own in eighth, as Katherine Shields (Salisbury, N.C.) placed 11th. Hailey Sarausky (Littleton, N.H.) finished 15th, while Erin Donohue (Norwich, Vt.) and Mackenzie Filippi (Cary, N.C.) placed 18th and 22nd, respectively.

Eric Bercume (Barre, Mass.) paced the Bobcats in the downhill, finishing 10th, as Jorgensen and Matthew Clements (New Market, Md.) placed 13th and 14th, respectively. Phillips added his first top-20 finish of the day in 19th, while placed 22nd. Bergey rounded out the field for the Bobcats in 42nd.

Sarausky turned in the performance of the afternoon for the Bobcats, earning her first podium of the weekend in the downhill with a third-place finish. Laura Wright (Apex, N.C.) would cap the day for Lees-McRae, posting a solid 16th-place performance to keep the Bobcats in contention for the team omnium.

Werner kicked off the weekend for the Bobcats in Friday's men's short track, finishing third behind Boulder's Samuel Morrison and Chris Baddick, as Vrouwenvelder placed 10th for the Bobcats. Bergey finished just outside of the top 20 in 21st, as Phillips and Bentley placed 38th and 44th, respectively.

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The Bobcats jumped into title contention with an impressive performance in the women's short track, placing all six riders in the top 17, including a trio in the top 10. Emily Shields led the way in fifth, making a late charge with an expertly executed attack on the final lap to earn a spot on the podium. Her twin sister Katherine Shields finished close behind in seventh, as Klingaman made her nationals debut in 10th.

Donohue followed closely in 12th, as Sarausky and Filippi placed 15th and 17th, respectively, to propel the Bobcats into a tie for second in the team omnium.

Lees-McRae returns to the course on Sunday with a chance to add an 11th team title to its trophy case, first taking the course for the team relay at 11 a.m., followed by the dual slalom at 12:30 p.m. at the Beech Mountain Ski Resort.

Photo Courtesy: Kerry Werner, LMC Athletics